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# \$4M line of credit approved for county

## Franklin doesn't resign as chairman

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The Sullivan County Delegation voted Friday to approve an additional \$4 million line of credit to keep the county solvent while Peter Franklin, D-Newport, retracted his decision to resign his position as delegation chair to the disappointment of at least two people.

"Because of the lack of information concerning the budget, I have decided to postpone it to another meeting," Franklin told the delegation at the start of the meeting. At a meeting in June he said he would resign.

July 13 at the end of the last delegation meeting, Franklin announced his intention to resign as chair.

Rep. Carla Skinder, D-Cornish, questioned if Franklin was going to remain in his position.

"But you still intend to resign as chair?" Skinder asked.

"I think, probably, yes," Franklin responded.

During the public participation portion of the meeting, Jeffrey Goff, the only member of the public present, told the delegation he was disappointed with the way the county is being run.

"We're here to improve Sullivan County," Goff said. "If you can't do that, I don't think you should be serving in public office."

Goff is the vice president of commercial banking at Centrix Bank in Concord and chairman of the United Way in Sullivan County.

Goff also directed his comments to Franklin.

"I was encouraged to hear you are resigning," Goff said. "It is perceived in the public that you are a roadblock."

Franklin offered to meet with Goff one-to-one, but Goff declined.

"Whatever is said should be said in a public forum," Goff said.

Goff also questioned why the county does not put tax anticipation notes out to bid in order to get the best interest rate. TANs are borrowed to pay bills before tax revenues are received.

"I find it disturbing the county doesn't put out the TANs to bid," Goff said. "And I've been in banking for 20 years."

Rep. Ray Gagnon, D-Claremont, agreed and said the TANs should be put out to bid.

But Rep. Brenda Ferland, I-Charlestown, the executive finance committee chairperson, said it is up to the county treasurer.

"The treasurer is the one that has the authority," Ferland said.

Discussion then moved to a request by Sullivan County Treasurer Cynthia Sweeney to borrow up to \$4 million in order to continue to meet the financial needs of the county through December.

On Wednesday the commissioners approved the credit line.

"Unless you want to do some massive firings, we can't meet payroll without the TAN," Sweeney said.

Franklin spoke against borrowing any more money in anticipation of the \$10.4 million in taxes the county will collect on Dec. 17. The county has already borrowed \$4.5 million in anticipation of the tax revenue.

"My suggestion is we not authorize a huge pot of money they will probably go through before December," Franklin said. "They'll be back asking for more."

According to Rep. Ellen Nielsen, D-Claremont, the total cost to run the county for one month is about \$2 million.

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Franklin suggested authorizing only an additional \$1 million TAN to keep the county solvent until the next delegation meeting.

Ferland disagreed.

"To limit this borrowing is a fool's game," Ferland said. "It's a line of credit."

Franklin assured everyone that he has no intention of shutting down the county.

"Absolutely we will not fail to meet payroll," Franklin said. "We

will not fail to feed the residents at the nursing home or the jail. We will keep the heat on."

Rep. Jay Phinizy, D-Acworth, suggested the county will need to make major budget cuts for the remainder of the year.

"The county will need to cut \$1.8 million out of the budget over the next three months," Phinizy said.

Skinder agreed but said there should not be any personnel cuts.

"I suggest that the commissioners not lay off any people when they make the cuts," Skinder said.

In a vote of 10-1, the delegation authorized the treasurer to borrow up to an additional \$4 million. Franklin was the only delegate who voted no.

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